



HALEY BARBOUR
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GOVERNOR HALEY BARBOUR FILLS CIRCUIT COURT VACANCY

(JACKSON, Mississippi) – Governor Haley Barbour today announced the appointment of former State Supreme Court Justice James L. “Jim” Roberts as Circuit Court Judge in Mississippi’s First Circuit Court District.

Roberts, of Pontotoc, will serve out the unexpired term of Judge Sharion Aycock in Place 4 in the district, which includes Alcorn, Itawamba, Lee, Monroe, Pontotoc, Prentiss, and Tishomingo Counties). The term ends January 4, 2009. Judge Aycock was recently appointed a U.S. District Court by President George W. Bush, becoming the first woman to serve on the federal bench in Mississippi.

“Jim once remarked that ‘lawyers must serve with honor and integrity, and we must police our profession ourselves to ensure continued respect for it.’ These comments exemplify the type of dedicated and conscientious service Jim has provided for Mississippi during the past couple of decades and will continue to provide in this new position,” Governor Barbour said. “Through his sound interpretation of the law, high moral character, and integrity, Jim Roberts is one of the most respected names in Mississippi’s judicial history, and I am proud to have him back on the job.”

Roberts has worked in Mississippi’s legal system for more than 25 years, serving as a chancery and youth court judge; State Supreme Court Justice; special judge; and municipal judge. In addition to state service, Roberts practiced law from 1971 to 1984 in Pontotoc, where he handled issues such as land and transactions, wills and estates, and family law. During this period, he simultaneously served as the county’s Prosecuting Attorney and Youth Court Prosecutor.

“I appreciate the confidence Governor Barbour has shown in me by appointing me to this position. I’m ready to get to work in the judiciary again on a full-time basis and will work hard to make a meaningful contribution,” Roberts said.

From 1984 to 1988, Roberts was Mississippi Commissioner of Public Safety, where he supervised agencies such as the state Highway Safety Patrol, Bureau of Narcotics, and the Crime Laboratory. In 2000, Roberts became an adjunct professor of criminal justice at the University of Southern Mississippi; he subsequently was awarded the Distinguished Criminal Justice

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Faculty Member award for the 2001-2001 academic year. Currently, Roberts is of Counsel at the Law Offices of Phillip L. Tutor, P.A., which he founded in 1971. He is listed in the Mississippi Bar Directory of Mediators and served during 2006 and 2007 as a member of the Mississippi Supreme Court's Annexed Committee on Mediation.

Roberts was inducted as a Fellow of the Mississippi Bar Foundation in 2002. He has been actively involved in a variety of professional and community organizations, including the Pontotoc County, First Judicial District, Mississippi and American Bar Associations; Mississippi Prosecutors' Association; Mississippi Conference of Judges; National Council of Family and Youth Court Judges; Pontotoc Rotary Club; and the Mississippi Historical Society.

Roberts graduated from Millsaps College with a bachelor's degree and earned a master's degree at Mississippi State University. He received a law degree from the University of Mississippi and completed the General Jurisdiction Course at the National Judicial College at the University of Nevada-Reno. Roberts has three stepchildren with his wife, Rose; together, they have eight grandchildren.

Governor Barbour's Judicial Appointments Advisory Committee, which reviews the qualifications of potential judicial appointees in accordance with Executive Order 914, found Roberts fully qualified to serve in this post.

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